

Factors That Influence the Consumer Purchase Intention in Social Media Websites

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Abstract – The market shares of different online social networking websites have grown rapidly in the recent years. The growth of social media and social network not only created a new way for people to communicate and interact with each other regardless of geographical distance, it also created a new style of commerce at the same time, known as social commerce. Social commerce evolved from E-commerce and it exists in a community where consumers can share and refer experiences of electronic transactions with each other before making purchase decision. Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence consumer purchase intention in social media websites. Majority of previous literatures focus more on E-commerce. In order to have a deeper understanding on consumer purchase intention in social media websites, a research model is designed suggest that perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, social influences, trust and perceived enjoyment may influence consumer purchase intention in social media websites. This model also suggests that there may have differences of consumer purchase intention in social media websites among demographic characteristics. Online questionnaires are conducted during this study. Also, several data analyses such as reliability test, descriptive test, *t*-test, One-Way ANOVA and Multiple Linear Regression are conducted. The result of this study proved that consumer perceived ease of use, consumer perceived usefulness, social influences, trust and consumer perceived enjoyment have an impact on consumer purchase intention in social media websites. Lastly, there is a difference of consumer purchase intention in social media websites among Malaysian consumer with different demographic characteristics.

Keywords: *Consumer Purchase Intention, Social Media, Social Commerce, Social Media Websites, Online Purchase, E-Commerce*

1. Introduction

Internet is one of the successful technologies that connecting many people in the world and changed the way of people live [6]. In Malaysia, the number of internet population exceeds 12 million people in year 2014 [25]. The increasing world internet population provides a huge market entity to business.

Internet websites are valuable to business because it is global reach and ubiquitous without the limitation of geographical location and cost. Therefore, many companies realize the opportunities of internet and transform or expand their businesses from traditional physical stores to online stores in order to provide products and services or serving their customer through electronic system. This new way of conducting business is now called electronic commerce or E-commerce. Today, most of the company use internet as a channel to conduct business and have an official website.

Nowadays, there is a new style of E-commerce emerging and business is conducted via social media which is called social commerce. Social media is a tool for sharing information among communities such as product and service information. According to [48], social media is the important driver of online purchase and sale of goods and its share increased nearly 200% in E-commerce from previous year to current year. According to [33], there is a high potential of social commerce in Malaysia, more than 50% of Malaysian consumers found their desired products from company advertise and marketing in Facebook. Moreover, Malaysian citizens login into and browse on social network sites 14 billion times in every month. However, there are many previous study on consumer purchase intention is still focus in the context of E-commerce environment.

There is still insufficient research specifically study on the consumer purchase intention in social media websites. In addition, it is not clear whether the finding of previous study in the context of E-commerce consistent with the consumer purchase intention in social media websites. Many factors that influence customer purchasing intentions on social media websites have not been identified in previous studies. The emergence of social commerce totally change the way of people purchase products and services and this trend causes business to rethink their operating and marketing strategy. Therefore, this research aims to identify and examine different factors that may affect consumer purchase intention through social media websites including perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, social influences, trust, perceived enjoyment and demographic characteristics.

2. Literature Review

Internet is a technology that dramatically change the way people live. In Malaysia, the number of internet population exceeds 12 million people in year 2014, which mean nearly half of Malaysia citizens' access to internet frequently [25]. Business, consumer and government engage in E-commerce because of the advantages of geographical reach through communication network, high speed of interactions between E-commerce participants, low cost of business transactions, increase productivity, ease of information sharing and transfer, gaining competitive advantage by implement E-commerce strategy [45]. Malaysia government established Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) to reduce the telecommunication tariffs and remove the censorship on Internet and develop the IT infrastructure to promote the internet usage and E-commerce adoption [49].

The advancement of E-commerce has extended to the introduction of social commerce through social media. Social media can be defined as internet-based applications which allow user to create, generate, and exchange content [27]. Social network is one of the services of social media which allow users to create their webpages and connect and share information with friends and family [34]. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ outlined the most important social network today [35]. Social commerce is an evolution of social media by associating shopping activities into it [12]. According to [12], shopping has always been a social activity and it takes place in social media has facilitated the buying and selling process in recent years. In 2013, \$5 billion of E-commerce revenue was generated through social media. In 2015, revenue generated in social commerce is expected to reach \$14 billion [38]. Social commerce become popular and it is influential in the purchase and selling good and service in the virtual world because of its increase of generated revenue. Social commerce exists in a community where consumers share their personal experience of electronic transactions and other users refer their experience before making purchasing decision in order to select a good product [53]. There is lack of a standard definition of social commerce. IBM defines social commerce as the concept within the context of E-commerce that connects customer and improve customer shopping experience [23]. In addition, social commerce is a subset of E-commerce which performs E-commerce transactions with social media technologies [30].

Purchase intention is evolves from the term intention. Intention comes from behavioral science. The subjective probability that a person performs a particular action is intention [17]. Intention is a plan to instruct a person to behave in a certain way and it implies in the way of "I should do", "I am going to do" and "I will do" [51]. Purchase intention is also regarded as an element of a consumer's cognitive behaviour revealing the way an individual intends to purchase a specific brand [22]. Purchase intention can be used to predict what products or brands consumers will buy next time when they do shopping [16]. According to [36], consumer loyal towards a particular products and brands is shown in a positive purchase intention and indicates the probability

of actual purchase. A customer with purchase intention not absolutely will make the purchasing decision. There are many factors that might affect the purchase intention including price, quality perception and value perception [54] and [21]. The desirability of a person to purchase a particular product or service through the website is called online purchase intention [9];[20].

Perceived ease of use is the degree which a person believes that using a particular system will be easily with less or no effort [14]. Consumer perceived ease of use not only cover the ability of person to use an innovation with no difficulty, it also represent that their ability to identify a best product or services with the ability to compare the function and benefits of a series of product and services. From consumers perspective, perceived ease of use reflect in their belief that they are able to use a particular product or services properly after reading the instruction or after using a product or services in a reasonable period of time. In social media websites context, people are motivated to use social networks services to seek the information [7]. Consumers require reliable and good information to make purchase decision because they cannot touch and test the product [29]. As a result, easiness to access product and services information in social media websites affects their purchasing intention.

Social influence or subjective norms represent the effect of social pressure to a person to behave [2]. According to [1], social influence is the effect on an individual based on behaviours of others. Friends, family, peers, co-workers and individuals or group of individuals who are related to a person behavioral intention can alter a person's thought, thinking and action [2]. When social influences apply into social media shopping, it refers to a person can be influenced by other social media user on whether he or she should purchases something or not. Social influence in the adoption of a new product can be divided into two forms. Normative social influence creates social pressure for people to use a product or a service to avoid people being out-dated or left behind by other people in the communities regardless whether people has interest on that product or service or not [5]. Informational social influence is defined as the process of social media users purchasing decision making by learning and observing the experience of other users who had adopted the products in social media websites [5]. In social media websites, opinions, experience and other information shared among users influence their purchasing intention.

Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance [14]. Perceived usefulness reflect in the outcome or results of a person use a particular system. Consumer perceived a product or service is useful when they achieve their purpose effectively after using it. Perceived usefulness is the extent to which an innovation is perceived as providing advantage to users. The advantage may in the form of economic profit or social prestige [41]. Customer more tends to online shopping if it will increase his or her efficiency and enhance the process of purchase a product [55]. In other words, consumers show his or her

willingness to use the same retail websites that they believe that retail website is capable to help them find out the products or services they want [11].

Shopping has been long regarded as an entertainment that brings people fun and joy [26]. In online environment, perceived enjoyment come from an experience in website or online shop [24]. Perceived enjoyment refer to the extent to which consumers feel pleasure when they purchase product or services on internet. The possibility of consumers to make transactions is higher when they feel pleasure on an online shop [8]; [15]. They feel fun and enjoy when searching the desired item on website [46]. Logically, when consumer receives enjoyment, they also satisfy on online shopping and more willing to purchase product and services on internet [40].

Trust as the belief that the other party will behave in a dependable manner in an exchange relationship [28]. In this study, trust is specifically analyzed and discussed in the context of social media shopping and the concept of trust other researchers in the dimensions of traditional purchase, E-commerce are used as a supporting evidence. Trust is divided into two aspects based on previous research, there are benevolence and credibility [4]. Benevolence defined as the confidence on other party because repeat transaction and the relationship between party [4]. Credibility means a trust on other party is dependable based on reputation. Therefore, trust on consumer form in their relationship in several transactions with an online retailer, consumer familiar with that online retailers believe that online retailer will not cheating. As a result, consumer tends to purchase with familiar sellers based on their confident on them.

In the perspective of E-commerce, demographic characteristic of online buyers can predict internet purchase intention [19]. One of the most important factors which affect online purchase intention is age [32]. Different generations may have different behaviour. A research shows that some young consumers are more concerned on the labelled products than other consumers [37]. Another factor which affects online purchase intention is gender [32]. Many women perceive shopping as a channel to socialize with other consumers. Hence, they prefer to shop from brick establishments rather than online stores. Men lay more emphasis on hassle free purchases in the comfort of their homes or workplaces and mind less on the hedonistic benefits of store shopping [50]. The consumer behaviour also affected by their races which represent one of the demographic characteristic [3]. A previous research proves people with same culture tend to share the same values and beliefs which guide their action [42]. Furthermore, people with higher education level tend to online shopping than people with lower educational level [13]. For less educated people, anxiety exists in his or her perceived towards information technology and reluctant to purchase online [39]. Similarly, income level of consumers will also have impact on consumers purchase intention. People with higher income tend to have more transaction with online retailers [18].

3. Methodology

After reviewing and concluding the result from literature review, the study purposed a research framework which is illustrated in Figure 1.

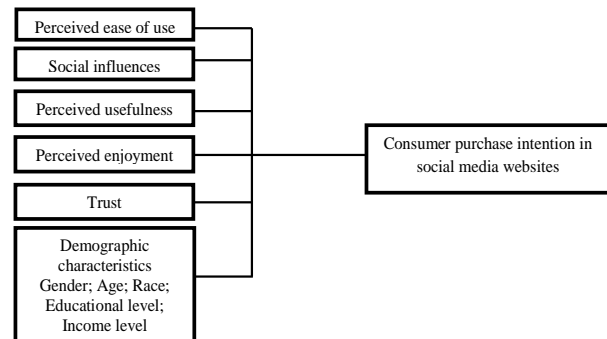


Figure 1. Research Framework

Hypotheses Development

H1: There is a difference of consumer purchase intention in social media website between genders.

H2: There is a difference of consumer purchase intention in social media website between age groups.

H3: There is a difference of consumer purchase intention in social media website between races.

H4: There is a difference of consumer purchase intention in social media website between educational levels.

H5: There is a difference of consumer purchase intention in social media website between income levels.

H6: There is a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and consumer purchase intention in social media websites.

H7: There is a significant relationship between social influences and consumer purchase intention in social media websites.

H8: There is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and consumer purchase intention in social media websites.

H9: There is a significant relationship between perceived enjoyment and consumer purchase intention in social media websites.

H10: There is a significant relationship between trust and consumer purchase intention in social media websites.

In this study, online questionnaire is used to gather data from respondents. A questionnaire is a form which consists of set of questions for respondents to answer and then collected. In designing a questionnaire, question asked is based on the variables involved in this study [44]. A 6 point Likert scale will be applied in this study. This study aim to find out the factor that affects consumer purchase intention in social media websites. The 6 point Likert scale is consist of the selection of "Strongly disagree, Disagree, Somewhat disagree, Somewhat agree, Agree, Strongly agree" [31]. Quota sampling is a sampling method in which a pre-determined group of people are sampled from different groups in a convenient way. It is useful for researchers to ensure that sufficient numbers of respondents of all subgroups are tested during data collection process [44]. Since the demographic characteristic is an independent variable in this study, this

method is suitable to include adequate respondents for each different demographic characteristic. The data analysis applied in this study consists of Reliability test, t-test, One-Way ANOVA and Multiple Linear Regression.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Assessment of Reliability

Based on the result shown in the Table 1, all variables obtained Cronbach's Alpha exceeds 0.8. Therefore, all variables in this study are highly reliable.

Table 1
Summary of Reliability Test

Dependent variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of item
Consumer purchase intention	0.968	5
Independent variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of item
Perceived ease of use	0.974	5
Perceived usefulness	0.947	5
Social influences	0.949	5
Trust	0.950	5
Perceived enjoyment	0.967	5

4.2 The Profile of Respondents

In this study, quota sampling is selected as a sampling method in which a pre-determined group of people are sampled from different groups in a convenient way. Author chooses this method in order to ensure that sufficient numbers of respondents of all subgroups are tested during data collection process. As a result, all age groups have 30 respondents (16.7%). The frequency of male is 102 respondents (56.7%) which are higher than the female with the frequency of 78 respondents (43.3%). Race is one of the demographic variables in this study including Chinese, Malay and Indian. The race with highest frequency is Malay, with 65 respondents (36.1%) whereas the lowest is Indian with frequency of 51 respondents (28.3%). There are five range of education level in this study: SPM, STPM, Diploma, Degree and others such as Master Degree and PhD. Majority of the participants has education level of STPM with 46 respondents (26.1%). Minority of participants of this online questionnaire are in the others education level groups which includes Master Degree and PhD with the frequency of 20 respondents (11.1%). Majority of the participants of this online questionnaire has the income level between RM1000-RM1999. There are 61 respondents has income level between RM1000-RM1999 (33.9%). Minority of the participants of this online questionnaire has the income level above RM4000. There are 10 respondents has income level above RM4000 (5.6%).

Table 2
Summary of Hypothesis Testing for t-Test and One-Way ANOVA

H _a	Variable	Sig.	t-Test & One-Way ANOVA	Finding
H ₁	Gender	0.000	$t = 7.523$	Supported
H ₂	Age	0.000	$F = 33.071$	Supported
H ₃	Race	0.000	$F = 21.613$	Supported
H ₄	Educational Level	0.000	$F = 19.486$	Supported
H ₅	Income Level	0.000	$F = 10.126$	Supported

Note: Significant at 0.05 level

Based on Table 2, all the variables were tested significant at 0.05 level. Table 2 reveals that the p-value of gender, age, race, educational level and income level were below 0.05. As a result, there is a difference of consumer purchase intention in social media websites with different demographic characteristics. For gender, the study shows that men have stronger purchase intention in social media websites than women. Men are also less emphasis on hedonistic benefits of store shopping. This explains why men prefer purchase through social media website. For age groups, the study reveals that younger consumers have stronger influence on online purchase intention. In addition, they are more responsive to the online information and basically navigating in social media websites is not a problem. For races, Chinese respondents found to be more agreeable with the questionnaire statements and have more purchase intention through social media websites. For education level, the study reveals that respondents with higher qualification tend to have higher purchase intention through social media websites than lower education level. For income level, the result reveals that respondents with higher income have stronger purchase intention through social media websites.

Table 3
Summary of Multiple Linear Regression

H _a	Variable	Dependent – Consumer Purchase Intention		
		Standardized Beta	Sig.	Finding
H ₆	Perceived ease of use	0.355	0.000	Supported
H ₇	Social influences	0.105	0.035	Supported
H ₈	Perceived usefulness	0.337	0.000	Supported
H ₉	Perceived enjoyment	0.110	0.021	Supported
H ₁₀	Trust	0.160	0.000	Supported
R ²		0.911		
Adjusted R ²		0.909		
F-value		357.419		

Note: Significant at 0.05 level

The multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between perceived ease of use, social influences, perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment and trust toward consumer purchase intention. Based on Table 3, all variables were tested significant at 0.05 level. R² presented with a strong inference, 0.911. About 91.1% of consumer purchase intention can be explained by all the five variables as tested. The value of adjusted R² is 0.909. From the table above, it shows that perceived ease of use has the highest standardize Beta (β -value = 0.355) followed by perceived usefulness (β -value = 0.337). This means that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are the most important independent variables that influence consumer purchase intention through social media websites.

Ease of use of social media websites allows users to search product information easily and complete the ordering process without complication. The results also indicated a positive relationship between consumers' perceived usefulness and consumer purchase intention. This indicates that respondents tend to purchase item through social media websites because it enhances their purchase experience. Besides, user purchase item through

social media websites because it helps them to save time in searching products with lower price and increases their possibilities to search for desired item. In addition, a positive relationship between social influences and consumer purchase intention is apparent. This result is consistent with past study conducted in Malaysia by [43]. It indicated that consumer may be influenced by the opinions and comments posted by other users during the purchasing process. The results show that consumers' perceived enjoyment has positive impact on consumer purchase intention through social media websites. According to [52], perceived enjoyment can have same effect on the intention to online shopping and shopping in physical store. This finding is coherent to previous study which shows that perceived enjoyment is highly correlated to consumer purchase intention on internet shopping [47]. Table 3 also shows that trust have a positive impact on consumers' purchasing intention in social media websites. It means that the confidence of customer on the seller will generate the intention to purchase. Although there is no evidence to directly prove the relationship between trust and consumer purchase intention through social media websites but previous study revealed that trust impact on people desire to online purchase [10].

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insight for social media websites users and sellers, institution, international business and future researchers. Major findings such as the positive influence of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment on consumer purchase intention through social media websites reinforce the need for social media websites to improve their function and advantage in order to be user friendly and provide them a joyful purchase experience. This study also confirms that trust have impact on consumer purchase intention through social media websites too. It also implies the need for international business to build its reputation and provide detailed information about their products and business. The effects of social influences on consumer purchase intention through social media website also provide business an idea to market their products through word of mouth communication. The differences of consumer purchase intention through social media websites among demographic characteristics indicate who are the key clients of social commerce is. In other words, it provides a direction to international business with who their strategy and operation should target on.

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